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March 16, 1998

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MARCH 17 1998

FCC MAIL ROOM

**VIA FEDERAL EXPRESS**

Office of The Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20554

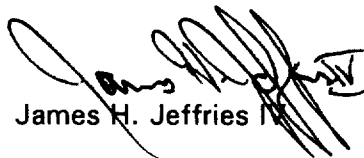
Re: *Telephone Number Portability*; CC Docket No. 95-116

Dear Sir or Madam:

I have enclosed an original and five copies of the *Reply Comments of The Concord Telephone Company on Request of BellSouth Corporation for Extension of Local Number Portability Deadline (NSD File No. L-98-27)* in the above-referenced proceeding. Please accept the original and four copies for filing, file stamp the additional copy and return it to me in the enclosed envelope.

If you have any questions about the enclosed, please call.

Sincerely,

  
James H. Jeffries

JHJ/srl

Enclosures

c: All Parties of Record  
Ms. Jeannie Grimes  
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BEFORE THE  
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20554

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MARCH 17 1998

In The Matter of )

FCC MAIL ROOM

Telephone Number Portability )

CC Docket No. 95-116

TO: Chief, Common Carrier Bureau

**REPLY COMMENTS OF THE CONCORD TELEPHONE COMPANY  
ON REQUEST OF BELL SOUTH CORPORATION FOR  
EXTENSION OF LOCAL NUMBER PORTABILITY  
DEADLINE (NSD FILE NO. L-98-27)**

The Concord Telephone Company, a CT Communications, Inc. company ("Concord"), through counsel and pursuant to the March 4, 1998 Public Notice of the Federal Communications Commission ("FCC") requesting comments on the above-captioned matter, respectfully submits the following Reply Comments in support of the request of BellSouth Corporation ("BellSouth") for an extension of the deadline for the implementation of a long-term database method for number portability for the Southeast Region.

Concord is an incumbent local exchange carrier providing local exchange and exchange access service with less than 15 percent of its access lines in communities of more than 50,000 in and around Concord, North Carolina. As such, Concord is a rural telephone company within the meaning of 47 U.S.C. § 251. Concord's existing service area is, in large part, incorporated within the Charlotte, North Carolina Metropolitan Statistical Area ("MSA"). The Charlotte MSA is a Phase III MSA for purposes of implementation of local number portability as specified in the FCC's July 2, 1996 *First Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* in this proceeding.

Notwithstanding Concord's status as a rural telephone company under Section 251, Concord has actively participated in the local number portability discussions within the state of North Carolina and is committed to supporting the infrastructure for local number portability

selected by the FCC. Further, the Common Carrier Bureau's decision on BellSouth's request for an extension of time to implement local number portability will directly impact Concord. In light of these facts, Concord is compelled to voice its support for BellSouth's request as in the interest of Concord's customers. Concord's support for BellSouth's request is based on three factors: (1) the importance of implementing an effective and functional local number portability database system; (2) the failure of Perot Systems to provide such a system; and (3) BellSouth's satisfaction of the regulatory criteria for an extension. Each of these factors supports granting BellSouth's request.

As the FCC recognized in its July 2, 1996 *First Report and Order* in this docket, establishing effective mechanisms for implementing local number portability is critical to "lower barriers to entry and promote competition in the local exchange marketplace."<sup>1</sup> In order for effective competition in the local exchange market to occur, customers must be able to utilize their existing telephone number irrespective of the company they choose to provide local service. The implementation of such a system, while critically important, is also technologically challenging. If local number portability, as envisioned by Congress and the FCC, is to become a reality it is absolutely critical that the system utilized to implement local number portability be fully functional and operationally ready for the task. This requirement favors a prudent approach to adopting and implementing the local number portability database system for the Southeast and supports the extension of time requested by BellSouth.

The proximate cause of BellSouth's extension request is a failure by Perot System's to implement a local number portability database system for the Southeast within the time frame that would allow compliance with the FCC's *First Report and Order*. That failure ultimately lead

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<sup>1</sup>*First Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* (CC Dkt No. 95-116) July 2, 1996 at para. 2.

to Perot System's withdrawal from its agreement to be the Southeast Region provider of such a database system. Perot's withdrawal, in turn, required the Southeast Region to arrange with Lockheed Martin to provide replacement service. As a result, substantial and additional engineering and software requirements have been placed on BellSouth. These developments have collectively delayed the date by which local number portability can realistically be deployed within the Southeast Region and provide a substantial basis upon which to authorize an extension of the local number portability implementation schedule for all the Southeast Region including Concord's area.

Finally, BellSouth has satisfied each of the criteria specified in 47 C.F.R. § 52.23(e) for an extension of the FCC's implementation schedule. Those requirements are (1) a demonstration of the facts underlying the carrier's inability to meet the deployment schedule, (2) a detailed explanation of the activities undertaken to meet the implementation schedule, (3) an identification of the particular switches for which the extension is requested, (4) the time within which the carrier will complete deployment in the affected switches, and (5) a proposed schedule for completing deployment to the affected switches. As is set forth in detail in BellSouth's *Petition to Extend Time for Implementation*, BellSouth has established each of these criteria and has requested a 90-day extension of the deployment schedule for local number portability within the Southeast Region. This request is within the scope of the Common Carrier Bureau's express authority under 47 C.F.R. § 52.23(e) and is based on facts constituting good cause for the granting of such an extension.

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the foregoing, Concord respectfully requests that the Common Carrier Bureau accept its Reply Comments in this proceeding and grant BellSouth's request to extend the implementation schedule for local number portability throughout the Southeast Region.

This the 16th day of March, 1998.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James H. Jeffries IV", written over a horizontal line.

James H. Jeffries IV  
Attorney for The Concord Telephone Company

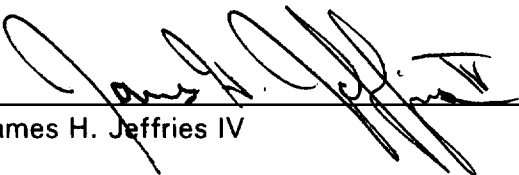
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Telephone: 336/273-5569

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

The undersigned hereby certifies that a copy of the foregoing REPLY COMMENTS OF THE CONCORD TELEPHONE COMPANY ON REQUEST OF BELL SOUTH CORPORATION FOR EXTENSION OF LOCAL NUMBER PORTABILITY DEADLINE (NSD FILE NO. L-98-27) was served upon each party of record in this action by depositing a copy of the same in the United States Mail, First Class Postage Prepaid, to their last known address.

This the 16th day of March, 1998.

  
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James H. Jeffries IV